



31 August 2007

Ryan Maughan, Division of Water Quality
State Water Resources Control Board
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Sacramento, CA 95814
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Re: Comment Letter – September 13, 2007 Irrigated Lands Program Joint Workshop.

Dear State and Regional Water Board Members:

The Winnemem Wintu Tribe submits this electronic letter as an official communication regarding the above referenced Comment Letter. We thank you for the opportunity to provide our public comments on the Central Valley's Conditional Waiver program for Irrigated Agriculture. On behalf of our tribe and all unrecognized tribal nations in the State of California, we call on you to act now to protect and restore the quality of our region's water from this major source of pollution.

As our partners in the environmental community have previously noted in their letters to you,

"irrigation water run-off from fields contain a toxic mix of fertilizers and pesticides, which ultimately flow into our waterways and seep into our aquifers. As a result, our local drinking water sources are the worst polluted in the State. More than 40,000 people in Central Valley communities each year are exposed to unsafe and illegal levels of contaminants in their drinking water due to groundwater contamination. Today over 20 percent of all community systems in Tulare County cannot meet basic safe drinking water laws, almost entirely due to nitrate contamination of groundwater sources."

Our tribe is disturbed by recent Central Valley Regional Water Board decisions that continue to allow water with highly concentrated levels of fertilizers and pesticides to contaminate community drinking water sources without regulatory compliance requirements or apparent concern.

Our people are traditional water people and wonder why irrigators are apparently given "a green light to pollute," while small, rural communities are forced to pay for bottled water and the cost for drilling new wells or treatment technology. The unregulated sources of contaminants affect people and our other relatives (animals, fish and even the small ones we cannot see openly) and are causing a major disruption of the whole circle of life in which water plays a major role. This is unthinkable to us and should be unthinkable to people who have the power to create positive change for all our relations, not just those who can influence legislation or regulatory oversight. Your attention to this dilemma will help cause a change to the better and will benefit those residents in the Central Valley who must pay some of the highest proportional water rates in the state for undrinkable water.

Groundwater protections that will benefit community health and that of the earth are urgently needed. We, as a sovereign nation and as keepers of ceremony that benefits the water of the entire state, urge you and the

"If the Sacred Fires are not lit, how will our children learn?"



How? Your Traditional Lifeways
Winnemem Wintu Tribe

Electronic Letter

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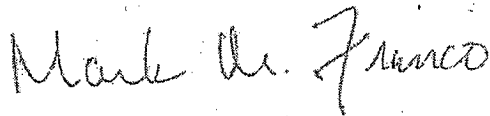
www.winnememwintu.us

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September 1, 2007

State Water Resources Control Board to stop waiving regulatory requirements and issue permits to irrigated agriculture that protects our water sources not just for "beneficial uses" but for the future of all people of this state.

Respectfully presented on behalf of the Winnemem Wintu and all people who find their voice ignored,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Mark A. Franco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Franco
Headman, Winnemem Wintu Tribe